Homes England

Date: 26 February 2025
Our Ref: RFI5025
Tel: 0300 1234 500
Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

████████████████

By Email Only

Dear ██████████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI5025

Thank you for your request for information which was processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You requested the following information:

We are conducting research into the UK public sector's readiness to harness the opportunities presented by artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in light of the government's AI Opportunities Action Plan.

Our research aims to understand the current state of AI adoption, infrastructure, and skills development within UK public sector departments and agencies. Please answer the following questions and provide additional context where possible?

AI Strategy and Planning

1. **To what extent does your department have a clearly defined and documented AI strategy? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **No AI strategy in place.**
   B. **Initial discussions or ideas about AI, but no concrete plan.**
   C. **A basic AI strategy is in development or has been drafted.**
   D. **A well-defined AI strategy is in place, but implementation is in the early stages.**
   E. **The AI strategy is being actively implemented with measurable progress.**
   F. **A fully defined and implemented AI strategy is driving significant impact.**

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2. **To what extent does your AI strategy or goals align with the AI opportunities action plan? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. Unaware of the AI opportunities action plan or no attempt to align with it.
   B. General awareness of the AI opportunities action plan, but no specific efforts to align.
   C. Some aspects of the AI strategy or goals are aligned with the AI opportunities action plan.
   D. Conscious effort made to align the AI strategy with the key principles and directions of the AI opportunities action plan.
   E. Strong alignment between the AI strategy or goals and the AI opportunities action plan, with clear connections and shared objectives.
   F. AI strategy or goals are fully integrated with the AI opportunities action plan, contributing directly to its successful implementation.

3. **What is the likelihood that your department's AI strategy will be fully implemented within the next two years? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. Significant obstacles and uncertainties make full implementation unlikely in the next two years.
   B. Implementation is in progress but faces challenges that may delay completion.
   C. Moderate confidence in achieving full implementation within the timeframe.
   D. High likelihood of full implementation, with most key elements in place.
   E. Almost certain to achieve full implementation within the next two years.

4. **How confident is your department that current AI governance structures are adequate for managing AI risks? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. No AI governance structures in place or serious concerns about their adequacy.
   B. Limited AI governance in place, with significant gaps and areas for improvement.
   C. Moderate confidence in current AI governance, but some areas of uncertainty remain.
   D. Generally confident in the adequacy of AI governance structures to manage most risks.
   E. Strong confidence in AI governance, with robust processes and oversight in place.
   F. Extremely confident that AI governance structures can effectively manage all foreseeable AI risks.

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5. **What percentage of your department's total budget is allocated to AI-related projects this fiscal year? How much is this?**

6. **How does your department or agency assess the economic impact or cost-effectiveness of AI technologies? Please select one of the following options that applies and provide any relevant data or reports on AI's economic benefits.**

   A. **No formal assessment: No systematic approach to evaluating the economic impact of AI.**
   B. **Qualitative assessment: Relies on anecdotal evidence, case studies, or expert opinions to assess the impact of AI.**
   C. **Quantitative assessment: Uses metrics, data analysis, and modelling to measure the economic benefits and costs of AI.**
   D. **Comprehensive evaluation: Includes both qualitative and quantitative assessments, considering a wide range of economic factors and potential impacts.**

AI Deployment and Use Cases

7. **What is your department's current stage of AI deployment? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **No AI use cases.**
   B. **Exploring opportunities**
   C. **Planning for at least one AI use case.**
   D. **Piloting at least one AI use case.**
   E. **At least one AI use case is fully deployed.**
   F. **Multiple AI use cases fully deployed.**

8. **For your most significant AI use case, how confident are you that the expected benefits will be realised? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **No clear expectations of benefits or serious doubts about achieving them.**
   B. **Some anticipated benefits, but significant uncertainty about their realisation.**
   C. **Moderate confidence in achieving some of the expected benefits.**
   D. **Confident that most of the expected benefits will be realised.**
   E. **Strong confidence that the AI use case will deliver significant benefits.**

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  F. **Extremely confident that the AI use case will fully achieve or exceed its intended benefits.**

Risk Management and Ethics

9. **How thoroughly has your department assessed the risks associated with AI deployment? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

  A. **No formal risk assessment conducted for AI deployment.**
  B. **Initial discussions about AI risks, but no systematic assessment.**
  C. **Some areas of AI risk have been assessed, but gaps remain.**
  D. **A moderate risk assessment has been conducted, covering key areas.**
  E. **A comprehensive risk assessment is in place, addressing a wide range of potential risks.**
  F. **A thorough and ongoing risk assessment process is embedded in AI development and deployment.**

10. **How confident are you that your department is compliant with relevant data protection laws when using AI? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

  A. **Significant concerns about compliance with data protection laws.**
  B. **Limited understanding of data protection requirements for AI.**
  C. **Some measures in place to ensure compliance, but gaps may exist.**
  D. **Reasonably confident in compliance with data protection laws.**
  E. **Strong confidence in data protection compliance, with robust processes in place.**
  F. **Fully confident in compliance with all relevant data protection laws and regulations.**

11. **How well does your department ensure transparency in the use of AI in public services? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

  A. **No efforts to ensure transparency in AI use.**
  B. **Limited information provided to the public about AI systems.**
  C. **Some transparency measures in place, but room for improvement.**
  D. **Reasonable transparency in AI use, with public information available.**
  E. **Strong commitment to transparency, with clear communication about AI systems.**
  F. **Full transparency in AI practices, including open data and explainable AI.**

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Data Residency and Sovereign Infrastructure

12. How does your department or public body ensure that its data storage complies with UK sovereignty and data residency requirements? Please outline any policies or regulations guiding data storage within UK borders.

13. Can you provide the proportion of data stored within UK-based infrastructure versus foreign cloud services (e.g., US-based providers) within your department/agency?

14. What measures are in place to ensure that your data storage solutions meet national security standards? Please provide details of relevant frameworks or protocols currently implemented.

Energy Consumption and Efficiency of AI

15. What is the estimated carbon footprint of your department or agency's AI operations (e.g., training, deployment) over the past year? Please include energy consumption figures if available.

16. How do you track the energy usage of AI workloads, and are there any reporting mechanisms in place for sustainability goals? Please provide relevant metrics or guidelines.

Data and Infrastructure

17. How would you rate the quality of data used for your AI systems? Please select one of the following options that applies.

    A. Data quality is poor and unreliable.
    B. Data quality is a concern, with significant issues.
    C. Data quality is adequate but could be improved.
    D. Good data quality with regular validation processes.
    E. High data quality with robust quality assurance measures.
    F. Excellent data quality with continuous validation and improvement.

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18. **What is the level of confidence in your department's digital infrastructure's ability to support current and future AI initiatives? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **Serious concerns about the infrastructure's ability to support AI.**
    B. **Infrastructure limitations may hinder AI initiatives.**
    C. **Moderate confidence in the infrastructure's capacity for AI.**
    D. **Confident that the infrastructure can adequately support current and near-term AI needs.**
    E. **Strong confidence in the infrastructure's ability to support ambitious AI projects.**
    F. **Extremely confident that the infrastructure is future-proof and ready for any AI challenge.**

19. **Does your department or agency currently use a hybrid infrastructure (i.e., a mix of on-premises and cloud services) for its digital operations, including AI applications? Please specify the proportion of services hosted on each type of infrastructure.**

20. **What factors influence your department's decision-making process when choosing between public cloud, private cloud, or on-premises infrastructure for AI-related projects or services?**

21. **What plans or initiatives are in place to ensure your department's digital infrastructure is scalable enough to meet future demands for AI-powered services or technologies over the next 5–10 years?**

22. **How does your department or agency ensure the quality of data used in AI-driven projects or services? Please provide any metrics, guidelines, or standards employed for data validation.**

Skills and Training

23. **How effectively is your department upskilling employees to use AI? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **No upskilling initiatives in place for AI.**
    B. **Limited training available, with little focus on AI skills development.**
    C. **Some training programs offered, but not comprehensive.**
    D. **Effective upskilling programs are in place, providing employees with essential AI skills.**
    E. **A strong focus on AI skills development, with comprehensive training and support.**

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F. **A culture of continuous learning and development, ensuring employees are equipped for the AI-powered future.**

24. **Will you be relying on in-house skills for AI strategy development and implementation or seeking third-party services/consultancy?**

Future Ambitions

25. **How confident are you that your department will reach its AI ambitions? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **Significant doubts about achieving AI ambitions.**
    B. **Low confidence in reaching AI goals.**
    C. **Moderate confidence in achieving some AI ambitions.**
    D. **Confident in achieving most AI goals.**
    E. **Strong confidence in reaching AI ambitions, with clear plans in place.**
    F. **Extremely confident in achieving and exceeding AI ambitions.**

Response

We can confirm that we do hold some of the requested information. We will answer your questions in turn below.

AI Strategy and Planning

1. **To what extent does your department have a clearly defined and documented AI strategy? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **No AI strategy in place.**
    B. **Initial discussions or ideas about AI, but no concrete plan.**
    C. **A basic AI strategy is in development or has been drafted.**
    D. **A well-defined AI strategy is in place, but implementation is in the early stages.**
    E. **The AI strategy is being actively implemented with measurable progress.**
    F. **A fully defined and implemented AI strategy is driving significant impact.**

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We can confirm there is currently no AI strategy in place at Homes England (answer A).

2. **To what extent does your AI strategy or goals align with the AI opportunities action plan? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **Unaware of the AI opportunities action plan or no attempt to align with it.**
   B. **General awareness of the AI opportunities action plan, but no specific efforts to align.**
   C. **Some aspects of the AI strategy or goals are aligned with the AI opportunities action plan.**
   D. **Conscious effort made to align the AI strategy with the key principles and directions of the AI opportunities action plan.**
   E. **Strong alignment between the AI strategy or goals and the AI opportunities action plan, with clear connections and shared objectives.**
   F. **AI strategy or goals are fully integrated with the AI opportunities action plan, contributing directly to its successful implementation.**

We can confirm we are aware the AI opportunities action plan was published in January 2025. We have not undertaken any specific efforts to align at this time (answer B).

3. **What is the likelihood that your department's AI strategy will be fully implemented within the next two years? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **Significant obstacles and uncertainties make full implementation unlikely in the next two years.**
   B. **Implementation is in progress but faces challenges that may delay completion.**
   C. **Moderate confidence in achieving full implementation within the timeframe.**
   D. **High likelihood of full implementation, with most key elements in place.**
   E. **Almost certain to achieve full implementation within the next two years.**

4. **How confident is your department that current AI governance structures are adequate for managing AI risks? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **No AI governance structures in place or serious concerns about their adequacy.**
   B. **Limited AI governance in place, with significant gaps and areas for improvement.**
   C. **Moderate confidence in current AI governance, but some areas of uncertainty remain.**

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    D. **Generally confident in the adequacy of AI governance structures to manage most risks.**
    E. **Strong confidence in AI governance, with robust processes and oversight in place.**
    F. **Extremely confident that AI governance structures can effectively manage all foreseeable AI risks.**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1

Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that in accordance with the FOIA we can only consider requests for recorded information, these questions ask Homes England to express an opinion which is not already recorded information.

5. **What percentage of your department's total budget is allocated to AI-related projects this fiscal year? How much is this?**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

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Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm there is no dedicated or allocated AI budget.

6. **How does your department or agency assess the economic impact or cost-effectiveness of AI technologies? Please select one of the following options that applies and provide any relevant data or reports on AI's economic benefits.**

   A. **No formal assessment: No systematic approach to evaluating the economic impact of AI.**
   B. **Qualitative assessment: Relies on anecdotal evidence, case studies, or expert opinions to assess the impact of AI.**
   C. **Quantitative assessment: Uses metrics, data analysis, and modelling to measure the economic benefits and costs of AI.**
   D. **Comprehensive evaluation: Includes both qualitative and quantitative assessments, considering a wide range of economic factors and potential impacts.**

We can confirm that Homes England relies on anecdotal evidence, case studies, or expert opinions to assess the impact of AI. (answer B).

AI Deployment and Use Cases

7. **What is your department's current stage of AI deployment? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **No AI use cases.**
   B. **Exploring opportunities**
   C. **Planning for at least one AI use case.**
   D. **Piloting at least one AI use case.**
   E. **At least one AI use case is fully deployed.**
   F. **Multiple AI use cases fully deployed.**

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We can confirm we are at the stage of exploring opportunities (answer B).

8. **For your most significant AI use case, how confident are you that the expected benefits will be realised? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **No clear expectations of benefits or serious doubts about achieving them.**
   B. **Some anticipated benefits, but significant uncertainty about their realisation.**
   C. **Moderate confidence in achieving some of the expected benefits.**
   D. **Confident that most of the expected benefits will be realised.**
   E. **Strong confidence that the AI use case will deliver significant benefits.**
   F. **Extremely confident that the AI use case will fully achieve or exceed its intended benefits.**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

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Risk Management and Ethics

9. **How thoroughly has your department assessed the risks associated with AI deployment? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **No formal risk assessment conducted for AI deployment.**
    B. **Initial discussions about AI risks, but no systematic assessment.**
    C. **Some areas of AI risk have been assessed, but gaps remain.**
    D. **A moderate risk assessment has been conducted, covering key areas.**
    E. **A comprehensive risk assessment is in place, addressing a wide range of potential risks.**
    F. **A thorough and ongoing risk assessment process is embedded in AI development and deployment.**

We can confirm we are having initial discussions about AI risks, but no systematic assessment (answer B).

10. **How confident are you that your department is compliant with relevant data protection laws when using AI? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **Significant concerns about compliance with data protection laws.**
    B. **Limited understanding of data protection requirements for AI.**
    C. **Some measures in place to ensure compliance, but gaps may exist.**
    D. **Reasonably confident in compliance with data protection laws.**
    E. **Strong confidence in data protection compliance, with robust processes in place.**
    F. **Fully confident in compliance with all relevant data protection laws and regulations.**

11. **How well does your department ensure transparency in the use of AI in public services? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **No efforts to ensure transparency in AI use.**
    B. **Limited information provided to the public about AI systems.**
    C. **Some transparency measures in place, but room for improvement.**
    D. **Reasonable transparency in AI use, with public information available.**
    E. **Strong commitment to transparency, with clear communication about AI systems.**
    F. **Full transparency in AI practices, including open data and explainable AI.**

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We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

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Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that in accordance with the FOIA we can consider requests for recorded information, these questions ask Homes England to express an opinion which is not already recorded information.

Data Residency and Sovereign Infrastructure

12. **How does your department or public body ensure that its data storage complies with UK sovereignty and data residency requirements? Please outline any policies or regulations guiding data storage within UK borders.**

The UK Government doesn't require official and official-sensitive information to be stored in the UK. When storing personal data, Homes England complies with relevant UK laws.

13. **Can you provide the proportion of data stored within UK-based infrastructure versus foreign cloud services (e.g., US-based providers) within your department/agency?**

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We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

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Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that we do not hold information about the storage locations of our information assets in a way that would allow us to provide a proportion of those which are stored in the UK and those that are not. We can advise that where Homes England provide for the storage of information all information is stored in UK datacentres.

14. **What measures are in place to ensure that your data storage solutions meet national security standards? Please provide details of relevant frameworks or protocols currently implemented.**

We can confirm we are compliant to ISO framework 27001 which is the globally recognized standard for information security management systems (ISMS). We are also complaint to GovAssure which is the cyber security assurance scheme for assessing the critical systems of government organisations.

Energy Consumption and Efficiency of AI

15. **What is the estimated carbon footprint of your department or agency's AI operations (e.g., training, deployment) over the past year? Please include energy consumption figures if available.**

16. **How do you track the energy usage of AI workloads, and are there any reporting mechanisms in place for sustainability goals? Please provide relevant metrics or guidelines.**

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Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that in accordance with the FOIA legislation we do not track this information.

Data and Infrastructure

17. **How would you rate the quality of data used for your AI systems? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **Data quality is poor and unreliable.**
    B. **Data quality is a concern, with significant issues.**
    C. **Data quality is adequate but could be improved.**
    D. **Good data quality with regular validation processes.**
    E. **High data quality with robust quality assurance measures.**
    F. **Excellent data quality with continuous validation and improvement.**

18. **What is the level of confidence in your department's digital infrastructure's ability to support current and future AI initiatives? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

    A. **Serious concerns about the infrastructure's ability to support AI.**

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B. **Infrastructure limitations may hinder AI initiatives.**
C. **Moderate confidence in the infrastructure's capacity for AI.**
D. **Confident that the infrastructure can adequately support current and near-term AI needs.**
E. **Strong confidence in the infrastructure's ability to support ambitious AI projects.**
F. **Extremely confident that the infrastructure is future-proof and ready for any AI challenge.**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

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We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that in accordance with the FOIA we can consider requests for recorded information, these questions ask Homes England to express an opinion which is not already recorded information.

19. **Does your department or agency currently use a hybrid infrastructure (i.e., a mix of on-premises and cloud services) for its digital operations, including AI applications? Please specify the proportion of services hosted on each type of infrastructure.**

We can confirm that 20% of our infrastructure is currently on-premises and 80% is cloud based.

20. **What factors influence your department's decision-making process when choosing between public cloud, private cloud, or on-premises infrastructure for AI-related projects or services?**

We can confirm the following factors would have an influence on our decision-making process

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when choosing between infrastructure platforms: cost, the skills required to design, implement and sustainably manage, ease of use, and integration with existing systems and architectures.

21. What plans or initiatives are in place to ensure your department's digital infrastructure is scalable enough to meet future demands for AI-powered services or technologies over the next 5–10 years?

We can confirm that we have confidence in the default benefits of Cloud scalability but would be guided by an AI Strategy once this is further progressed.

22. How does your department or agency ensure the quality of data used in AI-driven projects or services? Please provide any metrics, guidelines, or standards employed for data validation.

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

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Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that we have not yet created this information.

Skills and Training

23. How effectively is your department upskilling employees to use AI? Please select one of the following options that applies.

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- A. **No upskilling initiatives in place for AI.**
- B. **Limited training available, with little focus on AI skills development.**
- C. **Some training programs offered, but not comprehensive.**
- D. **Effective upskilling programs are in place, providing employees with essential AI skills.**
- E. **A strong focus on AI skills development, with comprehensive training and support.**
- F. **A culture of continuous learning and development, ensuring employees are equipped for the AI-powered future.**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Digital team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1

Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that in accordance with the FOIA we can consider requests for recorded information, these questions ask Homes England to express an opinion which is not already recorded information.

24. **Will you be relying on in-house skills for AI strategy development and implementation or seeking third-party services/consultancy?**

We can confirm we would be relying on external services and consultancy.

2ⁿᵈ Floor
The Lumen
St James Boulevard, Newcastle Helix
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5BZ

0300 1234 500
@HomesEngland
www.gov.uk/homes-england

Date: 26 February 2025
Our Ref: RFI5025
Tel: 0300 1234 500
Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Future Ambitions

25. **How confident are you that your department will reach its AI ambitions? Please select one of the following options that applies.**

   A. **Significant doubts about achieving AI ambitions.**
   B. **Low confidence in reaching AI goals.**
   C. **Moderate confidence in achieving some AI ambitions.**
   D. **Confident in achieving most AI goals.**
   E. **Strong confidence in reaching AI ambitions, with clear plans in place.**
   F. **Extremely confident in achieving and exceeding AI ambitions.**

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

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Right to Appeal

If you are not happy with the information that has been provided or the way in which your request has been handled, you may request an internal review. You can request an internal review by writing to Homes England via the details below, quoting the reference number at the top of this letter.

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Information Governance Team
Homes England
The Lumen
2nd Floor
St James Boulevard
Newcastle Helix
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 5BZ
United Kingdom

Your request for review must be made in writing, explain why you wish to appeal, and be received within 40 working days of the date of this response. Failure to meet this criteria may lead to your request being refused.

Upon receipt, your request for review will be passed to an independent party not involved in your original request. We aim to issue a response within 20 working days.

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) however, the Information Commissioner does usually expect the internal review procedure to be exhausted in the first instance.

The Information Commissioner's details can be found via the following link:

https://ico.org.uk/

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Please note that the contents of your request and this response are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Homes England may be required to disclose your request and our response accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

The Information Governance Team
For Homes England